We’ve got the Poa annua blues

What can we do to manage Poa annua (annual bluegrass)?

—OHIO

Annual bluegrass thrives in shaded, compacted, and poorly drained areas. Improve growing conditions to promote the desirable turfgrass growth. Proper fertilizing, watering, mowing and aerating will benefit desirable turfgrass and make it better able to compete with opportunistic weed plant infestation.

In areas where the Poa annua problem is severe, consider treating with non-selective herbicides such as Roundup or Finale, and reseed.

There are other chemical strategies that may be more suitable for particular sites. For instance, consider using growth regulators such as Primo from Novartis, TGR from Scotts, or Cutless from Dow AgroSciences. These growth regulators help suppress annual bluegrass by allowing desirable turfgrass to compete for light, space, nutrients. Reports also indicate that the Chipco Ronstar brand of oxadiazon herbicide from Rhone-Poulenc, can also effectively help manage Poa annua. Ronstar is a preemergent herbicide which can help manage problem grassy weeds such as crabgrass or goosegrass, as well as annual bluegrass weeds. Reportedly, one application in the late summer or early fall will help manage annual bluegrass for the season without the need for repeated applications or the risk of phytotoxicity.

Herbicides in packets are handy

I have been using the non-selective herbicide Roundup in the powder packet for many years. It’s easy to mix in a hand-held sprayer. Is there a product for selective weed control that comes in a packet like Roundup?

—MICHIGAN

I am familiar with a product called Dissolve from Riverdale Co. that comes in packets and is for selective weed control. However, they are not small packets.

Dissolve herbicide comes in either 25 lb. (10 x 2½-lb. packets) or 5 lb. (8 x 10-ounce packets). These packets are designed to be mixed with several gallons of water for treating large areas. This water-soluble product is a three-way postemergent selective herbicide containing the amines of 2, 4-D, Mecoprop and Dichlorprop for use on golf courses, parks, highways, sod farms, ornamental turf lawns and similar non-crop areas. It controls a number of common weeds including some that are considered difficult to manage.

According to the label, a 2½-lb. packet will treat from 43,000 to 58,000 sq. ft. (1 to 1½ acres) of cool season turfgrasses. For warm season turfgrasses, it can be used over 1½ to 2 acres.

For best results, target the applications when weeds are growing. Spring and fall are generally the best times to treat.

The label suggests that exposure to moisture before mixing may cause water-soluble bags to rupture. Take all the precautions and follow mixing guidelines as specified in the label.

For more about weed control, see our weed control guides which begin on page 42. —ed.